United Nations A/C.5/53/SR.7

General Assembly
Fifty-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
29 October 1998

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 7th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 14 October 1998, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Abelian ..... (Armenia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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98-81627 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 118: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/23)

1. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to a letter dated 9 October 1998 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee transmitting, for appropriate action, a letter dated 8 October 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina addressed to the President of the General Assembly containing a request for an exception to the application of Article 19 of the Charter (A/C.5/53/23).

2. **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, said that the European Union had joined in the consensus on the requests of Guinea-Bissau and Georgia for a temporary exemption from the application of Article 19 of the Charter, although it had expressed regret that the decision had been taken without thorough consideration and had made it clear that it should not constitute either a procedural or a substantive precedent. The European Union had been able to support the decision because it had been taken without prejudice to Article 19 of the Charter or rule 160 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. It had repeatedly stated its wish to tighten the rules for the application of Article 19 to ensure that the disincentive envisaged by the founder Members was properly implemented. That was one of the four key elements of the European Union proposals for improving the Organization's financial situation. Article 19 was the only mechanism currently available for sanctioning States which did not pay their dues on time.

3. Article 19 had a let-out clause for States which were not in a position to pay, and the Committee on Contributions had reviewed the procedural aspects of the consideration of requests for an exemption under Article 19. The European Union would not be able to support any further exemptions under Article 19 without a thorough consideration of the report of the Committee on Contributions, as provided for in rule 160. The proper time for consideration of the issue would be when the Fifth Committee took up the report of the Committee on Contributions.

4. **Mr. Zhang Wanhai** (China) said that his delegation viewed the current difficulties of Bosnia and Herzegovina with sympathy. The Committee had already taken favourable decisions, supported by his delegation, on the requests for exemption submitted by Guinea-Bissau and Georgia. Since all countries suffering economic difficulties should receive equal treatment, the Committee should accede to the request by Bosnia and Herzegovina. The procedure for dealing with such matters did require improvement.

5. **Ms. Topić** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that Bosnia and Herzegovina was still suffering the consequences of a deadly conflict which had taken the lives of more than 250,000 persons and had destroyed the country's social structure. In such a devastating situation, the priority for Bosnia and Herzegovina had to be to restore the life of the country, and it bore the additional burden of a debt of over US$ 10 million to international organizations, including the United Nations. Her delegation would much appreciate the Committee's understanding of the complex financial and political issues. Repayment of the debt to international organizations was a high priority for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it would do its best to resolve the issue.

6. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) endorsed the statement made by the representative of China. In view of the difficult circumstances of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Committee should grant a temporary exemption from the application of Article 19.

7. **Mr. Yussuf** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation supported the position expressed by the representatives of China and Pakistan. When the Committee had taken its decision to grant an exemption for Guinea-Bissau and Georgia it had created a precedent. It had, in fact, opened a Pandora's box and it was now impossible to deny the request of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He suggested that the meeting should be suspended for a short time to allow for informal discussions.

8. **Mr. Medina** (Morocco) said that his delegation supported the request of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

9. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda) said that the General Assembly had opened the Pandora's box and could certainly close it. Since it was probable that more requests for an exemption would be made, the Committee should defer the item until later and take up all the requests at the same time.

10. **The Chairman** said that the letters containing the requests came to the Committee direct from the General Assembly and not via the Committee on Contributions. He did not know how many more requests might arrive.

11. **Mr. Abdullah** (Yemen) agreed with the representative of China that all States should receive equal treatment. The Committee should therefore give favourable consideration to the request of Bosnia and Herzegovina; such action would

not constitute a precedent. His delegation endorsed the suggestion just made by the representative of Uganda.

12. **Ms. Dinić** (Croatia) said that her delegation supported the request of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Fifth Committee was certainly the best place for dealing with the general issue of requests for an exemption.

13. **Mr. Watanabe** (Japan) said that his delegation sympathized with Bosnia and Herzegovina in its difficult situation. It, too, supported the Ugandan suggestion that all the requests should be dealt with at once.

14. **Mr. Demir** (Turkey) supported the request of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

15. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that his delegation agreed with the representative of China on the need for equal treatment and supported the request. However, it would be better for the Committee to deal with such requests promptly as they came in.

16. **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria) said that the European Union supported the Ugandan suggestion.

17. **Mr. Ahounou** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the Committee had not followed the normal procedure when it had approved the requests for an exemption submitted by Guinea-Bissau and Georgia; on that occasion the Chairman had instead complied with the wishes of members. Although his delegation had sympathy for Bosnia and Herzegovina, it felt that the normal procedure should be followed in all cases.

18. **Ms. Buergo Rodriguez** (Cuba) said that the Committee should not take a selective approach to requests for an exemption. When the Committee had acceded to the requests submitted by Guinea-Bissau and Georgia, her delegation had stressed the need to establish a mechanism allowing for equitable consideration of such requests. There was no justification for handling the request of Bosnia and Herzegovina any differently from the two earlier requests; it should therefore be granted. The whole issue of exemptions should be discussed in depth under item 118.

19. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt) said that his delegation endorsed the comments made by the representative of China on the need for equal treatment. Of the three procedural proposals that had been made, the Committee should opt for the one made by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania and hold informal discussions on the issue.

20. **Mr. Abdullah** (Bahrain) supported the request submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina.

21. **Mr. Zhang Wanhai** (China) said that his delegation endorsed the comments just made by the representative of Egypt.

22. **Mr. Mirmohamamad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Committee should accede to the request of Bosnia and Herzegovina just as it had acceded to those of Guinea-Bissau and Georgia. It could perhaps revert to the issue when it took up the report of the Committee on Contributions.

23. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda), clarifying his earlier remarks, said that, since another request for an exception to the application of Article 19 of the Charter was expected shortly, from the Congo, the Committee might save time by considering both requests together. While his delegation had never proposed that the scale of assessments should be considered as a package, the Committee was not obliged to grant an exception to a requesting State merely because it had previously done so for another State. Each case must be considered on its merits.

24. **Mr. Medina** (Morocco) noted that there was no reason for the Committee to defer its decision, since no objections had been raised to the request from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

25. **The Chairman** noted that there were opposing views on the matter and that three courses of action were possible. The Committee could take up the matter again later in the session in the context of its substantive consideration of the item of scale of assessments; or it could await the formal request from the Congo and consider both requests together; or, finally, it could take a decision on the matter at the current meeting. He would be guided by the Committee on how best to proceed.

26. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) noted that no substantive objections had been raised to the request from Bosnia and Herzegovina. He therefore supported the proposal of the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania that the meeting should be suspended briefly to enable a decision to be reached in informal consultations.

27. **Mr. Ahounou** (Côte d'Ivoire) supported the suggestion made by the representative of Uganda that the two requests should be considered together.

28. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt) suggested that it might be helpful to get the views of the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the matter.

29. **Ms. Topić** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that, even though the matter was one to which her Government attached the highest priority, in a spirit of accommodation, her delegation would be willing to return to the item in a day or two, by which time the Committee would have received the request from the Congo.

30. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to defer consideration of the request from Bosnia and Herzegovina until later in the week, when it was expected

that a request would also have been received from the Congo.

31. *It was so decided.*

Agenda Item 114: Programme planning (*continued*) (A/53/6 (Prog.1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13/Rev.1, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23 and Corr.1, 24 and Corr.1, 26, 27 and 28), A/53/16, A/53/90, A/53/122 and Add.1, A/53/133 and A/53/134)

32. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, noted with satisfaction the spirit of compromise and political will which had enabled the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) to make recommendations on all the issues it had considered.

33. In particular, he welcomed the recommendation that the role of CPC as the main subsidiary organ of the Economic and Social Council and of the General Assembly for planning, programming and coordination should be strengthened. He also welcomed the recommendation that priorities should continue to be established in the medium-term plan to guide the allocation of resources in the subsequent programme budgets. Once established by the General Assembly, those priorities could not be altered unless the General Assembly decided otherwise.

34. With regard to the proposed revisions to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, the Group of 77 and China concurred with the conclusions and recommendations contained in Part Two, paragraphs 52 and 53, of the report of CPC (A/53/16).

35. With regard to the strengthening of the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives, however, the Group of 77 and China regretted the fact that the Office of Internal Oversight Services guidelines on programme monitoring and evaluation did not conform to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning. The guidelines, moreover, should have been submitted to CPC for its consideration and approval before being issued to programme managers.

36. The Group of 77 and China noted the delay in the submission of the reports of the Secretary-General on programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1996-1997 (A/53/122 and Add.1). The reports, moreover, should have contained a better analysis of the implementation of the priority activities set out in the relevant medium-term plan, instead of relying so heavily on statistics and percentages. Also of concern was the low rate of implementation of mandated programmes and activities, an issue that needed to be addressed seriously.

37. The Group of 77 and China noted with concern the large number of outputs which had been terminated under the subprogrammes designated as high-priority areas. The Secretary-General's reports failed to explain why resources had not been redeployed to ensure a higher level of implementation. Sound and predictable ways must therefore be explored for financing the implementation of mandated programmes and activities which were priority areas in the medium-term plan.

38. Another matter of great concern was the termination of outputs because of the reduction in resources called for by the General Assembly, despite the latter's decision that the proposed savings should not affect the full implementation of mandated programmes and activities. The Group of 77 and China also noted with concern that some extrabudgetary activities had been financed from the regular budget.

39. The very high vacancy rate, which in some cases had reached nearly 40 per cent, had also contributed to the termination of programmes and activities, particularly in the regional commissions, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The Group of 77 and China strongly believed that the vacancy rate should not be used to achieve budgetary savings and that the General Assembly's decision to keep the vacancy rate at 6.4 per cent should be fully respected.

40. The Group of 77 and China was further concerned about the observation contained in paragraph 65 of the Secretary-General's report (A/53/122) that the ongoing efforts aimed at introducing the concept of results-oriented budgeting were a step in the right direction. In its view, such a position was an attempt to prejudge the outcome of negotiations in the General Assembly on the proposal.

41. Lastly, the Group of 77 and China sought clarification of the statement contained in paragraph 29.1 of document A/52/122/Add.1 that, in spite of its operational independence, the Office of Internal Oversight Services could not avoid being affected by the precarious financial situation of the Organization.

42. **Ms. Chen Yue** (China) said that her delegation attached great importance to the strengthening of the role of CPC in planning, programming and coordination. Thanks to the spirit of accommodation shown by its members, CPC had been able to reach consensus on the important issues which it had considered. She hoped that the same spirit would be displayed by members of the Fifth Committee as they debated the report.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.5/53/SR.8

General Assembly
Fifty-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
29 October 1998

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 8th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 15 October 1998, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Abelian ..... (Armenia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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98-81657 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 125: Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (A/52/730/Add.2 and Add.3 and Add.3/Corr.2; A/53/474)

Agenda item 136: Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (A/52/772/Add.2; A/53/474)

Agenda item 140: Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (A/53/437 and A/53/481)

1. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said that the proposed budget for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999 was $65 million gross. It provided for the maintenance of the Mission at the authorized strength of 203 military observers, 186 contingent personnel, 7 force orderly personnel and 81 civilian police observers, supported by a civilian establishment of 285 international staff. The proposed budget was based on the maintenance of the resources in the Mission area for the period ending 30 June 1998, with the exception of two demining platoons which were to have been repatriated by that date. Those platoons were now expected to leave the Mission in October 1998.

2. A change in the contract for the lease of three helicopters since the submission of the original budget proposals had resulted in an additional requirement of $1.6 million. As indicated in the exchange of letters with the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) reproduced in annexes I and II to the related report of ACABQ (A/53/474), it was the Secretary-General's view that the additional cost could be met from within existing estimates.

3. Taking into account that the General Assembly had already approved an appropriation and assessment for the period from 1 July to 31 October 1998, a further appropriation and assessment of $42.3 million gross for the period from 1 November 1998 to 30 June 1999 ought to be sufficient. The Advisory Committee recommended an appropriation and assessment of $37.25 million gross.

4. The proposed budget for the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT) for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999, which amounted to $22,282,100 gross, provided for the maintenance of UNMOT at its authorized strength of 120 miliary observers, 2 civilian police, 68 international staff and 143 locally recruited staff. It reflected an increase of $5.7 million gross over the previous budget, pursuant to the expansion and extension of the mission's mandate by the Security Council.

5. Following the murder in July 1998 of four members of UNMOT, the Secretary-General had requested an amount of $4.1 million for armoured vehicles and improved communications equipment. Taking into account appropriations and assessments already approved, a further appropriation and assessment of $14.1 million gross for the period from 1 November 1998 to 30 June 1999 ought to be sufficient. The Advisory Committee's recommendation was for an amount of $11.9 million gross.

6. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on the financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) (A/53/437), he said that the General Assembly had appropriated an amount of $21 million gross for the maintenance of UNPREDEP at a military strength of 750 troops for the period from 1 July to 31 August 1998 and the liquidation of UNPREDEP thereafter, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1142 (1997). The Council had subsequently extended the mandate of the Force until 28 February 1999, and had authorized an increase in troop strength to 1,050. The Secretary-General was recommending an appropriation of $34.4 million to cover the additional requirements for the maintenance of UNPREDEP for the period from 1 July 1998 to 30 June 1999.

7. **Mr. Zahid** (Morocco) said that the letter from the Controller to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee reproduced in annex I to document A/53/474 indicated that failure to conclude the status-of-forces agreements was impeding progress towards the holding of a referendum in Western Sahara. Yet the report of the Secretary-General (S/1998/849) to which that comment made reference stated, rather, that a number of problems continued to impede progress towards the holding of a referendum, and that signature of the status-of-forces agreements was long overdue. The Secretary-General had thus never stated that the delay in concluding the status-of-forces agreements was impeding progress towards the holding of a referendum.

8. It should be appreciated that the Governments of Algeria and Mauritania, in addition to his own Government, would need to sign the agreements. His Government, for its part, had already submitted proposed amendments. MINURSO had, in fact, been present in Morocco since late 1991, its presence there being governed by an exchange of letters between his Government and the Secretary-General constituting a legal instrument according appropriate privileges and immunities. That instrument had allowed MINURSO to discharge its mandate without any difficulty up to the present time.

9. A further difficulty in the Controller's letter lay in the reference to the completion of the identification process. The Secretary-General's report had actually stated that the identification of over 147,000 applicants had been completed, which did not mean that the identification process as such had been completed. Moreover, any difficulties in identifying applicants from the three groupings referred to by the Secretary-General were not attributable to his Government. The Controller's letter also referred to "contested tribal groupings", a phrase which did not appear in the Secretary-General's report and which, as far as the United Nations and his own Government were concerned, was simply not relevant, since those candidates, in common with all others, had been duly registered. Only one of the parties involved sought to contest its status.

10. Those comments applied also to the Advisory Committee's reply to the Controller, reproduced in annex II to document A/53/474.

11. Lastly, in paragraph 1 of the French text of the Advisory Committee's report, MINURSO was referred to as a "Mission d'observation" (observer mission), whereas it was a Mission for the holding of a referendum in the southern provinces of Morocco, also referred to as Western Sahara.

12. He trusted that the three minor inaccuracies he had mentioned, which were no doubt inadvertent, would be corrected.

13. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said there had been no intent on the part of the Secretariat to misrepresent what the Secretary-General had said or what the actual situation was. He had simply attempted to write a letter to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee summarizing the situation in a few paragraphs. He had not expected that letter to become an official document of the General Assembly, otherwise the Security Council report would have been quoted verbatim. He trusted that the delegation of Morocco would see the matter in that spirit.

Agenda item 114: Programme planning (*continued*) A/53/6 (Prog. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13/Rev.1, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 23 and Corr.1, 24 and Corr.1, 26, 27 and 28), A/53/16, A/53/90, A/53/122 and Add.1, A/53/133 and A/53/134)

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001 (*continued*)

14. **Ms. Aragon** (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that she welcomed the new format for reporting the discussions of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC). ASEAN attached great importance to the role of CPC in the planning, programming and budgeting process, as outlined in General Assembly resolution 41/213. It associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

15. With respect to the Secretary-General's proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001 relating to programme 15: Economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific (A/53/6 (Prog. 15)), she reaffirmed her support for the multifaceted role of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) as a regional forum for the exchange of views and experience and as a catalyst for regional cooperation for development. The proposed revisions to programme 15 were in conformity with the conference structure mandated by ESCAP. She hoped that the Commission's decision to reduce the number of its subprogrammes from 10 to 7 would improve the efficiency of its secretariat. However, she was concerned to note, from the Secretary-General's programme performance report (A/53/122/Add.1, para. 16.9), that a high vacancy rate and resource constraints had adversely affected the full implementation of priority areas of the Commission's work programme in 1996–1997.

16. ASEAN welcomed the mainstreaming of the gender perspective into all relevant areas of the Commission's work. It was pleased that the proposed revisions had taken into account recent developments such as the current economic crisis. The Commission's subprogramme on development research and policy analysis was very important in that it would provide a broad view of regional economic and social trends and a basis for setting longer-term policy goals for the region. She welcomed the priority to be given to the short- and long-term impact of the current crisis on the countries affected and on the region as a whole, and looked forward to the completion of the analysis and recommendations mentioned in paragraph 15.9 (f) of document A/53/6 (Prog. 15).

17. ASEAN endorsed the recommendation of CPC on programme 15, as contained in paragraph 94 of its report (A/53/16). It agreed with CPC that the Organization's priorities should continue to be established in the medium-term plan, which was the principal policy directive of the United Nations (A/53/16, para. 48).

18. **Mr. Lozinsky** (Russian Federation) welcomed the new format of the medium-term plan which established a clearer relationship between planning and budgeting and between the programmes and organizational structures of the Secretariat and should thus ensure greater accountability and enhance responsibility for programme delivery. At the same time, the medium-term plan should be a flexible management tool and must not be a means of retaining outdated mandates and programmes.

19. During the current year, the General Assembly would be called upon to adopt the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1998–2001. His delegation was pleased to note that CPC had reached a consensus at its thirty-eighth session on all the proposed revisions, and it was prepared to support its recommendations.

20. Referring to the Secretary-General's report on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1996–1997 (A/53/122 and Add.1), he said that his delegation agreed with the conclusions of CPC, as contained in paragraphs 33 and 34 of its report (A/33/16), in particular concerning the need for greater emphasis on qualitative analysis and the evaluation of programme performance.

21. He noted with regret that, once again, the Secretary-General's report was mainly descriptive in nature and contained too little analytical information on the Organization's programmes to enable specific conclusions to be drawn and recommendations made on ways of enhancing the effectiveness of its work during subsequent planning and budgeting cycles. His delegation was firmly convinced that evaluation was an essential means of ensuring the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the Organization's activities and agreed with CPC that further improvement was required with respect to evaluation.

22. In conclusion, his delegation supported the recommendations of CPC on the proposed revisions to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programming Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.

23. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and affirmed the importance of the medium-term plan, which embodied the legislative mandates in specific programmes and activities and reflected the priorities of the Member States.

24. In the view of his delegation, the priorities identified in the medium-term plan should be taken as an overall framework that would be spelled out in more specific terms in the budget outline where they would be related directly to resources and budget appropriations, subject to there being no conflict or discrepancy that might give rise to confusion in the establishment of the programme budgets. In that connection, his delegation stressed the importance of spelling out legislative mandates very clearly so as to avoid any ambiguity or subjective interpretation in their implementation.

25. He referred to the late submission of the report on the programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1996–1997 (A/53/122 and Add.1), saying that his delegation shared the concerns expressed by CPC in paragraph 19 of its report (A/53/16). He emphasized that the Secretariat must comply with the six-week rule for the submission of reports.

26. His delegation commended the Secretariat on the high rate of implementation, especially in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Public Information, and hoped that a similar increase in implementation rates would be achieved by the International Trade Centre and the Economic Commission for Africa where the rates were alarmingly low. His delegation had taken note of the explanation of those low rates given in the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/122, para. 11); there was a need to increase the extrabudgetary resources for the International Trade Centre in order to enable it to carry out its mandate and activities more fully.

27. He commended the important role played by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and also the activities with respect to human settlements, crime, drugs and refugees, and emphasized the necessity of making resources available to the Department of Public Information so that the message could be disseminated to all and not be directed to one specific group. It was important to retain traditional means of communication while at the same time making use of advanced technologies.

28. His delegation appreciated the efforts made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services to uncovering irregularities and improve the financial and administrative functioning of the Organization. referring to paragraph 29.1 of document A/53/122/Add.1, he enquired whether the vacant posts in the Central Monitoring and Inspection Unit and the Investigations Unit were still vacant and asked about the impact of the frozen posts, if any, on the activities of the Office.

29. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) said that CPC played a key role in setting priorities and supervising the coordination of the activities carried out by various components of the

Organization. At its most recent session, CPC had successfully formulated conclusions and recommendations on all the issues before it. That exceptional exercise must be complemented by decisive action on the Secretariat's part to improve the quality of its reports so as to enable Member States to take substantive decisions. The CPC report itself contained a number of indications on the manner in which information should be presented to the Member States, particularly with regard to programme implementation. His delegation supported the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of CPC, which would facilitate the work of the Fifth Committee.

30. **Mr. Hae-Yun Park** (Republic of Korea) said that he welcomed the improved working methods of CPC and the spirit of collaboration that had prevailed at its most recent session, which had reflected a genuine commitment to strengthening the role of CPC. His delegation had often stressed the importance of planning, programming and evaluation and of the medium-term plan as the principal policy directive of the United Nations. The new format of the medium-term plan had resulted in better identification of the Organization's objectives and greater accountability in the Secretariat. He supported the recommendations and conclusions of CPC, as contained in document A/53/16.

31. **Mr. Asadi** (Islamic Republic of Iran), Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, said he was pleased that the report of CPC had been received favourably by the Fifth Committee. The thirty-eighth session of CPC had been free from unnecessary confrontational polemic and had been marked by a clear political will, on the part of all participants, to tackle contentious issues and to engage in a genuine give and take. That improvement was attributable to the improved working methods of CPC. The next step was to ensure that the report of CPC received due attention from the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, through the Fifth Committee, and that the recommendations and conclusions formulated on all items were duly followed up.

Agenda item 112: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Agenda item 119: Human resources management (*continued*)

Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.8: Gratis personnel provided by Governments and other entities

32. **Mrs. Brennen-Haylock** (Bahamas), Vice-Chairman, introducing draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.8, which had been submitted following informal consultations, said that it reaffirmed and strengthened the substance of previous resolutions on gratis personnel. It sent a clear message that Member States were fully committed to the 28 February 1999 deadline for the phase-out of gratis personnel. Paragraph 8, which had been supported by all delegations in the informal consultations, introduced a new element by requesting the Secretary-General to ensure that recruitment for any new posts arising from the phase-out of gratis personnel was made on as wide a geographical basis as possible with due regard to gender. The beginning of paragraph 6 should be revised to read, "Takes note of the commitment and the assurances by the Secretary-General that the recruitment process for the replacement of type II gratis personnel, including those in the two international tribunals, will be completed by 28 February 1999".

33. **Mr. Wortel** (Director, Operational Services Division) said that, at the 5th meeting of the Committee, he had informed Member States that the deadline for the submission of applications for posts requiring active military and civilian police service had been extended to 27 October 1998. At the same time, notes verbales had been distributed to all Member States to inform them of the extension of the deadline. During informal consultations regarding the support account and gratis personnel, four Member States had reported that they had not received the note verbale which had been circulated to all Member States on 7 October 1998. Under the circumstances, he wished to confirm that the Secretariat would make all possible efforts to ensure that the candidates nominated by those Member States which reportedly had not received the note verbale on time were accorded equitable consideration for the posts concerned. Those exceptional arrangements would not in any way affect the mandated deadline of 28 February 1999 for the phasing out of type II gratis personnel and the completion of the related recruitment exercise.

34. *Draft resolution A/C.5/53/L.8 was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.

United Nations A/C.5/53/SR.9

General Assembly
Fifty-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
29 October 1998

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 9th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 16 October 1998, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Abelian ..... (Armenia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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Agenda item 118: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (*continued*)

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98-81681 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 118: Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/C.5/53/23 and 24)

1. **The Chairman** recalled that at its 7th meeting the Committee had decided to defer its consideration of the request submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina, in a letter contained in document A/C.5/53/23, for temporary exemption from the application of Article 19 of the Charter pending receipt of a similar request from the Congo. The latter request had now appeared as document A/C.5/53/24.

2. **Ms. Topić** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that her delegation suggested that the question should be taken up in informal consultations.

3. **Mr. Gotienne** (Congo) said that 15 October had marked the first anniversary of the end of a war which had totally destroyed the Congo's banking and other administrative structures. The Congo had always been assiduous in the payment of its assessed contributions to the United Nations but had been forced to submit a request for temporary exemption from the application of Article 19 because of the country's exceptional current difficulties. His delegation agreed with the suggestion of Bosnia and Herzegovina that the question should be taken up in informal negotiations but hoped that the Committee would respond favourably to the request in the very near future.

4. **Mr. Schlesinger** (Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union fully agreed with the suggestion made by the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It appreciated the flexibility shown by Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Congo and looked forward to the earliest possible discussion of the matter.

5. **Mr. Watanabe** (Japan) said that his delegation also supported the suggestion.

6. **Mrs. Powles** (New Zealand) said that her delegation supported the requests of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Congo and agreed that they should both be taken up in informal consultations.

7. **Mr. Zhang Wanhai** (China) said that his delegation had stated its views on the question at the Committee's 7th meeting. It now agreed to take it up in informal consultations.

8. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation had hoped that the Committee would act on the requests of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Congo in the same way as it had recently dealt with similar requests. It could nevertheless agree to consider the matter in informal consultations.

9. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) said that his delegation was grateful to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Congo for their flexibility. It considered that all requests for exemption from the application of Article 19 should be considered case by case and in accordance with the rules of procedure but could agree to the suggestion for informal consultations.

10. **Mr. Medina** (Morocco) said that his delegation was also grateful to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Congo for their flexibility. It reiterated its support for both requests.

11. **Ms. Buergo-Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that her delegation had expected the Committee to take decisions on the two requests in line with its decisions on the requests of Guinea-Bissau and Georgia. However, it could accept the suggestion to discuss the matter informally and hoped that the Committee would deal with the requests promptly on the basis of equal treatment for all Member States.

12. **Mr. Kabir** (Bangladesh) said that his delegation also welcomed the flexibility shown by Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Congo. It hoped that the issue would be taken up in informal consultations as soon as possible.

13. **Mr. Darwish** (Egypt) said that his delegation also endorsed the suggestion for informal consultations, which appeared to be acceptable to the Committee. The kind of goodwill shown by Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Congo always helped the Committee in its work.

14. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that his delegation had stated its position at the Committee's 7th meeting when it had supported the request of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the basis of equal treatment for all Member States. It approached the request of the Congo in the same spirit. It would have liked the Committee to settle the matter at the current meeting and hoped that the informal consultations would produce decisions very quickly.

15. **Mr. Daka** (Zambia) said that his delegation supported the two requests and looked forward to discussing them in the informal consultations.

16. **Mr. Armitage** (Australia) said that his delegation was also grateful to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Congo for their flexibility. The informal consultations ought to provide the Committee with an opportunity to restore some of the procedural regularity needed in the consideration of the issue. Without prejudice to the two requests before the Committee, his delegation felt that the issue had broader implications since it involved a provision of the Charter. In the informal negotiations the Committee should explore

ways of ensuring that in future the provision was given its intended effect.

17. **Mr. Elmontaser** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that like some other delegations his delegation had expected the Committee to deal with the two requests in the same way as it had dealt with the earlier requests. It had no problem with the suggestion of Bosnia and Herzegovina for informal consultations as supported by the Congo. It thanked the two delegations for their flexibility, which it hoped would be matched by similar flexibility in the informal negotiations.

18. **Mr. Lozinski** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation was grateful to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Congo for their flexibility and could agree to discuss the issue in informal consultations.

19. **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) said that the United States was also grateful to the two delegations for their flexibility on the question of informal consultations. However, the most appropriate forum for consideration of the issue was the Committee on Contributions, and her delegation hoped that the requests would be passed on to that Committee so that the Fifth Committee could have the benefit of its views.

20. **Mr. Bay** (Singapore) said that his delegation took a sympathetic view of the difficulties of Member States legitimately seeking exemption from the application of Article 19 and thought that the existing procedures for presenting such requests were adequate. It hoped that all aspects of the issue would be considered in the informal negotiations.

21. **Mr. Saha** (India) said that his delegation was grateful to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Congo for their flexibility. The important thing was to ensure equal treatment for all Member States. His delegation could agree to informal consultations, which it hoped would produce positive decisions in the light of the great difficulties experienced by the countries concerned.

22. **Mr. Jaremczuk** (Poland) said that his delegation's position was identical to the one stated by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

23. **Mr. Al-Malek** (United Arab Emirates) said that his delegation thanked Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Congo for agreeing to discuss their requests in informal consultations. It supported both requests for exemption on the basis of equal treatment for all Member States.

24. **Mr. Abdullah** (Bahrain) said that he had stated his delegation's position on the request of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Committee's 7th meeting. In the same spirit it supported the request of the Congo and thanked both delegations for their flexible attitude.

25. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to hold informal consultations as soon as possible with a view to reaching agreement on the decisions to be recommended to the General Assembly on the requests submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Congo.

26. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.